

§ 3. *The Festival in the Month of Athyr*

estival of The foregoing evidence lends some support to the conjecture—for it is only a conjecture—that the great festival of Osiris at Sais, with its accompanying illumination of the houses, was a night of All Souls, when the ghosts of the dead swarmed in the streets and revisited their old homes, which were lit up to welcome them back again. Herodotus, who briefly describes the festival, omits to mention its date, but we can determine it with some probability from other sources. Thus Plutarch tells us that Osiris was murdered on the seventeenth of the month Athyr, and that the Egyptians accordingly observed mournful rites for four days from the seventeenth of Athyr.¹ Now in the Alexandrian calendar, which Plutarch used, these four days corresponded to the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth of November, and this date answers exactly to the other indications given by Plutarch, who says that at the time of the festival the Nile was sinking, the north winds dying away, the nights lengthening, and the leaves falling from the trees. During these four days a gilt cow swathed in a black pall was exhibited as an image of Isis.

antiquity by the doctors of the Persian world by a theory faith. For that faith "in its most that the *Gathas* were a comparatively finished and purest form, in the *Gathas* > late work based on the teaching of does not recognize the dead as objects Philo of Alexandria. But this attempt worthy of worship and sacrifice. But of a Jew to claim for his race the the popular beliefs were too firmly inspiration of the Persian scriptures rooted, and the Mazdeans, like the has been coldly received by Gentile sectaries of many other ideal and lofty scholars. See J.

H. Moulton, *Early*
forms of religion, were forced to give
(London, 1913), pp. 8
way. As they could not suppress the
worship and get rid of the primitive
Osiris, 39. As
and crude ideas involved in it, they
Osiris on the seven -
set about the reform in another way :
see *ib.* 13 and 42.
they interpreted the worship in a new
statement on this subject is
manner, and thus the worship of the
the evidence of the
dead became a worship of the gods or
a document dating
of a god in favour of the loved and lost
dynasty, which places
ones, a pious commemoration of their
Osiris at Sais on
names and their virtues." See N. the seventeenth
day of Athyr. See
Soderblom, *Les Fravashis*(Paris, 1899),
Herodots zweites Bitch,
pp. 6 sq. The *Gathas* form the oldest
Religion der alien
part of the *Zend-Avesta*. James *Agypter*, p. 112 ;
id., *Religion of the*
Darmesteter, indeed, in his later life
pp. 211 sq.

Zoroastrianism

sqg.

¹ Plutarch, *Isis et*

to the death of

teenth of Athyr

Plutarch's

confirmed by

papyrus Sallier IV.,

from the 19th

the lamentation for

N. the seventeenth

A. Wiedemann,

p[^] 262; *id.*, *Die*

James *Agypter*, p. 112 ;

Ancient Egyptians•,